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THOMAS LEVITT

of Exeter and Hampton, in New Hampshire:

HIS ENGLISH CONNECTIONS,

WENTWORTH,
HUTCHINSON,
WHEELWRIGHT.

Compliments
V. C. Sanborn

Will the genealogists to whom these notes are sent, advise the undersigned as to any new facts in their knowledge, or their ideas as to the best way to trace this Levitt line in England?

1904

PRIVATELY PRINTED BY V. C. SANBORN
KENILWORTH, ILLS., U. S. A.

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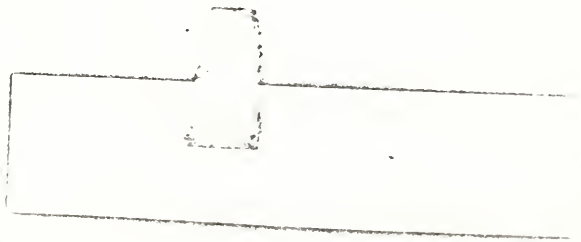
THOMAS LEVITT, OF EXETER,

AND HIS ENGLISH CONNECTIONS.

No record exists of Thomas Levitt's arrival in America, nor from what part of England he came. He is first heard of in Exeter (New Hampshire), as one of the combination formed there in 1639 under the leadership of John Wheelwright. Among the members of this group were several who had probably come to the new country through Wheelwright's influence, or that of his famous sister-in-law, Anne Hutchinson, wife of William Hutchinson and daughter of a Lincolnshire clergyman, Edward Marbury.



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July 14, 1911.

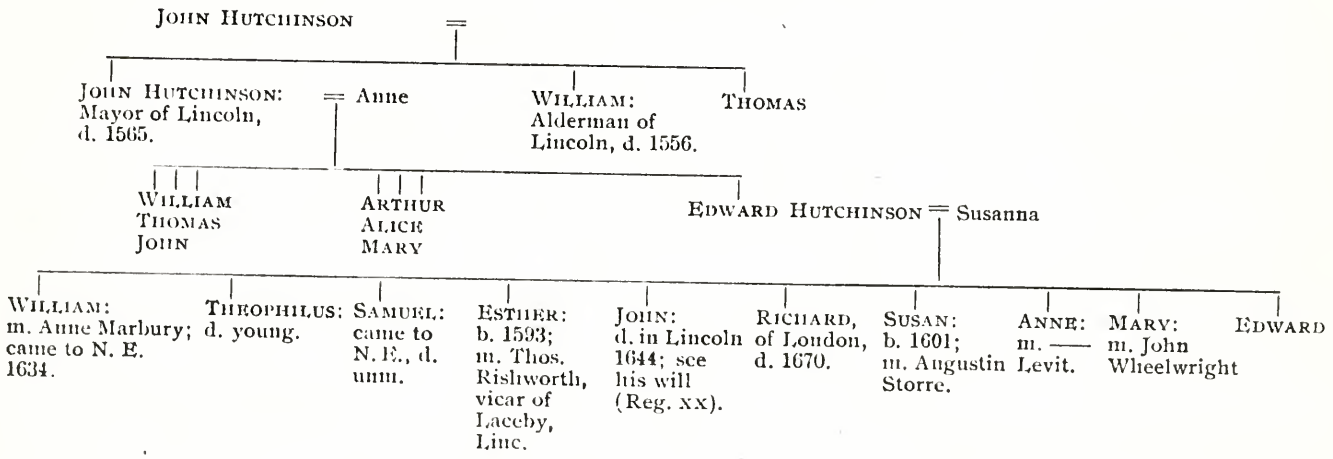
Mr. W. N. C. Carlton,
The Newberry Library,
Chicago.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 12th duly received. I enclose herewith a copy of my 8-page pamphlet on Thomas Levitt. I thought I had already given a copy to the Library. Please accept it with my compliments. The Newberry Library has done so much for my researches that I feel considerably in its debt.

Yours very truly,

The researches of the late Colonel Chester in the Wheelwright, Hutchinson and Wentworth families show the close relationship of these early settlers, as exhibited by the following sketch pedigree :



Thus, we see that of this Exeter combination the following were closely akin to Wheelwright or his wife.

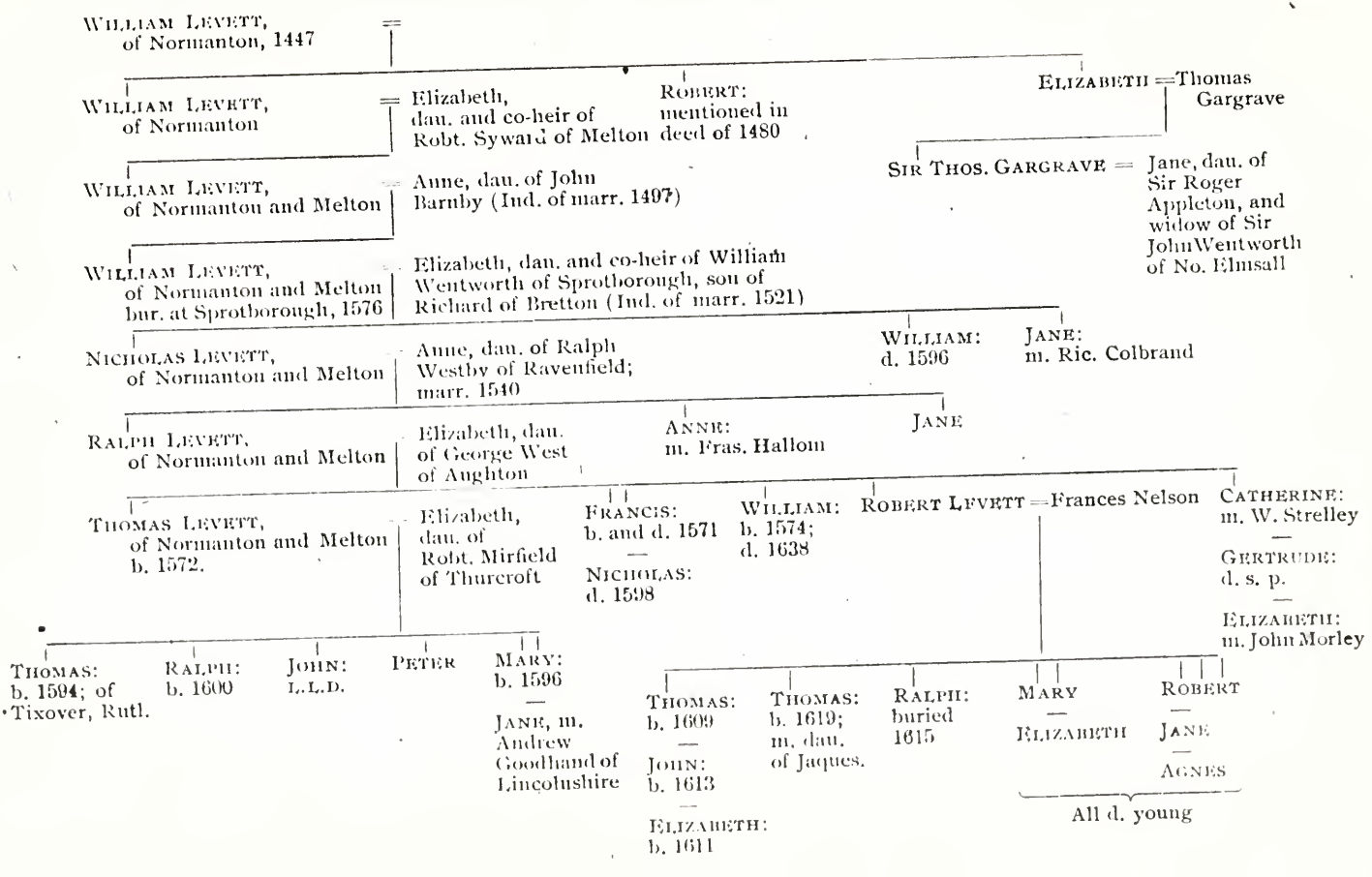
1. AUGUSTIN STORRE, married Susan Hutchinson, and was a son of Thomas Storre, Vicar of Bilsby, Linc., whose daughter was Wheelwright's first wife.
2. EDWARD RISHWORTH, son of Thomas Rishworth and Esther Hutchinson.
3. WILLIAM WENTWORTH, grandson of Christopher Wentworth and Catherine Marbury, whose brother, Francis Marbury, was father of Anne, wife of William Hutchinson.
4. CHRISTOPHER HELME, son of William Elmes, of Long Sutton, Linc., and Priscilla, aunt of William Wentworth.
5. CHRISTOPHER LAWSON, son of Rev. John Lawson and Anne, aunt of William Wentworth.
6. THOMAS LEVITT, perhaps son of —— Levit and Anne Hutchinson. The will of John Hutchinson, in 1644, mentions his "sister Levit," and a witness to the will was Ralph Levit.

Thomas Levitt in 1639 was not twenty-one. When the Massachusetts authorities forced Wheelwright, under sentence of banishment, to seek a more distant post, Levitt did not follow him to Wells, but moved to Hampton, where he lived and died. Perhaps he was instrumental in securing Wheelwright, in 1647, as pastor of the Hampton church.

Thomas Levitt married, about 1643, Isabel, daughter of John Bland, of Colchester, Essex, and widow of Francis Asten, of Hampton. He died in 1696, "aged over eighty," and his widow died in 1699, aged eighty-seven.

We may set down, therefore, the probability that Thomas Levitt was from Lincolnshire, or its vicinity, as were his connections, the Hutchinsons, Wheelwrights and Wentworths. To corroborate this, an early deed of Wheelwright's (dated 1677) conveys "lands in Mawthorpe (Par, of Willoughby, Lincolnshire), and in Burnthorpe and Hogsthorpe, which were in the tenure of John Bannister, *and by the said Wheelwright were purchased of Francis Levet, gent.*, of North Willingham, Lincolnshire."

printed *in extenso* in *Miscell. Gen. et Herald.* (Series III, Vol. I.) This pedigree is briefly as follows:



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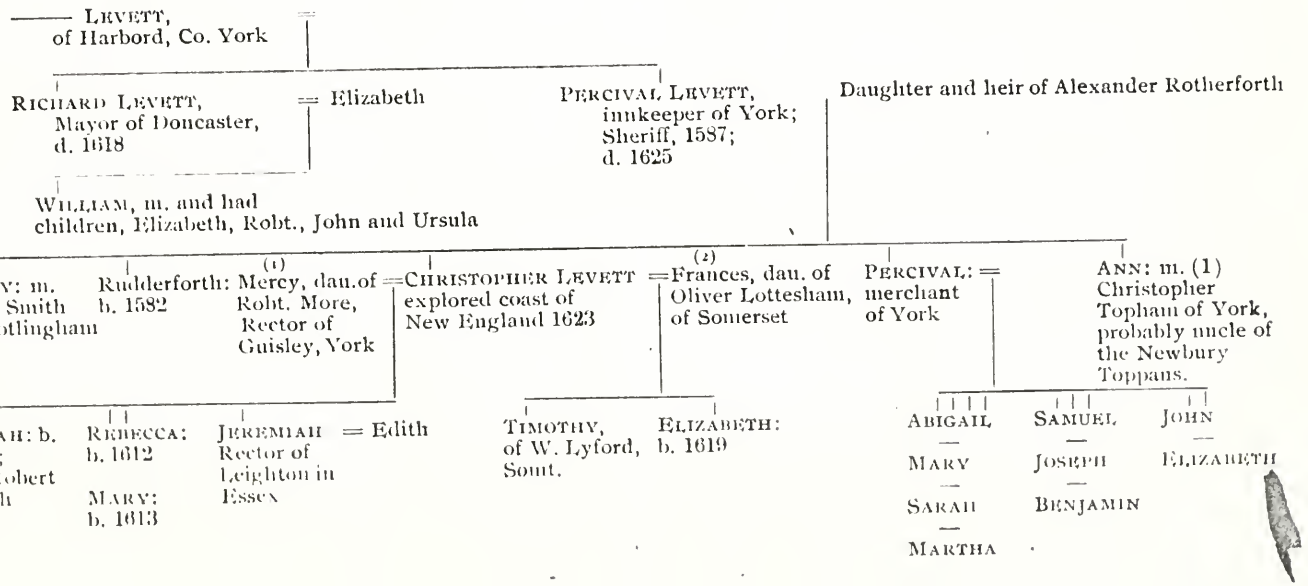
The arms of this Levett family were: *Sable, a fess embattled between 3 lions' heads erased, argent*, quartering Syward and Wentworth. These arms, without the quarterings, were also borne by an early explorer of New England, Captain Christopher Levett, whose life has been written by Mr. James P. Baxter, for the Gorges Society. Christopher Levett recorded his pedigree in the Dorset Visitation of 1626, and this pedigree, somewhat extended by Mr. Baxter, is as follows:



Thomas Levitt, of Exeter and Hampton, does not seem to fit into either of these pedigrees. The Melton line, it is true, has a Thomas, son of Robert of Snydale, born in 1609; but this does not exactly correspond with the age of our ancestor; and, furthermore, this Thomas, according to the pedigree, probably died young, since his father, Robert (if, indeed, he of Normanton and he of Snydale were the same), had another son Thomas, born in 1619.

The sons and grandsons of Thomas, of Exeter, bore these christian names:

Sons: Aretas, Hezron, John, James.

Grandsons: James, Thomas, Reuben, John, Moses.

Nothing here to give any clue, through ancestral names. It should be noted here that James Levitt, a son of Thomas, of Exeter, moved to Portsmouth, perhaps attracted there by his cousins, the Wentworths.

Nicholas Levett, of Melton, through whose wife the name Ralph comes into the line, apparently left but one son, Ralph (see his I. P. M.). This Ralph (born about 1542) left but two sons, Thomas and Robert, who had children; his sons, Francis, William and Nicholas apparently died s. p. Ralph's son Thomas, left four sons, Thomas, Ralph, John and Peter, who were all living at their father's death in 1623 Thomas moved to Rutlandshire, Ralph disappears, John and Peter left descendants. This Ralph, born in 1600, may have been the father of Thomas, of Exeter; but if the latter were born in 1616, as his death record states, this seems improbable.

When we turn to Christopher Levett's pedigree, there seems even less chance of a connection with our Thomas, though the Puritan connection through Christopher's first wife, who was the daughter of a famous Puritan rector, Robert More, of Guisley, seems suggestive. The fact of Christopher's early voyage to New England also looks as though there were a possible relationship.

Nowhere in either line do we find a Francis Levit, corresponding with him of North Willingham, from whom Wheelwright bought the lands in Lincolnshire. There was, however, besides the heraldic family of Levett, a considerable number of Yorkshire Levetts, probably of the same origin, but of humbler station—yeomen, farmers, etc. These Levetts seem to divide into two branches, one of which came from Bolton Percy, a few miles south of York, while the other originated in Holme-on-the-Wold, scattering into Lound, North and South Dalton, etc. Many wills of these Levetts are printed in *Miscell. Gen. et Herald.* (Series III, Vol. 1), but they do not give enough data to construct a pedigree. Among these wills I note that of—

"Francis Levett, of Boulton P'cy, yeoman (dated 1614), (York wills xxxiii, 375), mentions nephews Richard and John Take, nephew Richard Thompson, and his ch., nephew Edward Gatonbye, Anne Laycock my sister's child,

Thomas Hird my sister's child, grandsons Richard and Francis Doughty, grandchild Mary Gatonbye, nephews Robert and Richard Levett and their sister Mary, godson Percival Levett."

See also the suggestive will of John Levit, of Staunton, Notts, plasterer, dated June 28, 1627, filed in York, and proved by William Levit:

"To be buried in parish church of Newark-on-Trent. To sister Ellen. To Brothers James, Thomas and Richard Levit. Mother-in-law Joan Richards. Marie Richards. Thomas Storr, his wife, son and daughter. Residue to brother William Levit, executor. Supervisors, Father George Richards and brother James. Witnesses: Godfrey Alexander, Edw. Armstrong, Thomas Storr."

This will deserves attention because:

(1) Of the mention of a Thomas Storr, though it may not be the Wheelwright connection.

(2) Of the name James Levit, which was preserved in several lines of the American family.

The Registers of Staunton and Newark give no Levit marriages.

I incline to the belief that Thomas, of Exeter, came from the Melton line, for the following reasons:

1. That line intermarried with Wentworth and Mirfield; both in the direct line of the American Wentworths, who were apparently akin to our Thomas Levitt.
2. The best clue we have to the English *habitat* of our Thomas is his probable connection with Hutchinson, of Lincoln, and that clue points to a Ralph Levit, an ancestral name in the Melton line.
3. Thomas is also an ancestral name in the Melton line.

I should say the lines to be followed up, were:

1. Lincoln wills. (I find two: Robert Levitt, of Lincoln, 1565, Cons. Ct. Linc. No. 212; and Thomas Levitt, of Empingham, Dean and Chap. of Lincoln, 1666-71, No. 207.)
2. Registers of North Willingham, of Doncaster, and of Bolton Percy.
3. York wills.